FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

From the Articles of Incorporation, 1950.

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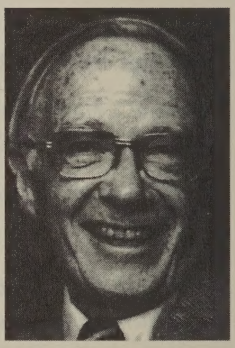
Cover photograph by Robert F. Campbell: Redwoods in the Mariposa Grove, Yosemite National Park, California



In the fall of this year, Fellowship in Prayer will publish *The Gift of Prayer - A Treasury of Personal Prayers From the World's Spiritual Traditions.* (See catalogue copy on the next page.)

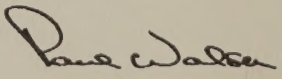
Universal and timeless in their appeal, these life-enhancing prayers come from the heart: prayers of adoration, gratitude, and thirst for God. Prayers for peace and happiness for oneself and for all beings. Prayers that ask for help and hope, for courage, for patience, for release from suffering. Prayers for our children, for our neighbors, for all those in need, for our planet.

The Gift of Prayer is not a scholarly survey, nor is it limited to specific religions or themes. Rather, its prayers are meant to be prayed daily, by you and me, in times of trouble or joy, in good times and bad, in times of anger, or despair, in times of thanksgiving, in times of need.

Regardless of our particular faith tradition, we have found that prayer works by leading us away from the ego, with its incessant demands for power, possessions and worldly success, and into the depths of our being. There we can reconnect with the divine energy that enables us to act with loving kindness toward each other and all of God's creation.

Through that healing experience we become more joyous, more peaceful, more hopeful, and more caring and compassionate toward ourselves and others. And we become channels through which those divine qualities become manifest in the world. We once again feel and experience our inter-relatedness with each other and the impulse to help each other in every way we can. When we pray we set into motion vast, invisible energies from which visible effects have always flowed, and always will.

Prayer puts us in touch with God's love, the sure foundation of our being. It leads us to the deep reservoir of spiritual power within us that is available always for helping us, our family, our neighbors, our mother earth. When we pray we open ourselves to the amazing grace that will bless and sustain us all the days of our lives. As Lorette Piper wrote in the June issue of *Fellowship in Prayer,* "By making us available to God's love, prayer can enable us to embrace the world God so loves." The Prayers in *The Gift of Prayer* can help us do that.

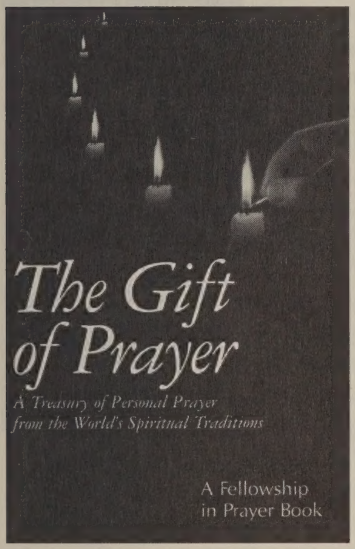


Paul Walsh

The Gift of Prayer

A Treasury of Personal Prayer from the World's Spiritual Traditions
A Fellowship in Prayer Book

A unique gift edition of over 400 classic and contemporary prayers



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Continum October

KEY FEATURES

- **Prayers for all faiths.**
- **Subject and Author/Source index.**
- **Appealing small gift format (4 1/2 x 7).**

THE PRAYERS IN this book were selected for their simplicity, beauty, and power of expression, and above all for their value as prayers for our daily use — prayers that might reflect and express our hope, our suffering, our joy, and our gratitude. They come from great writers and great sources ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, Christian and non-Christian — from English, Irish, Jewish, and African to Asian, Hindu, and Native American.

Contents include: Telling God's Greatness • Intimacy with God • All Our Relations • Make Me a Channel of God's Peace • Prayers for Protection • Gratitude • Life Here and Hereafter • The Peace that Passes All Understanding.

"This beatuiful, powerful, and thoughtful collection appeals to me for the poignancy of its prayers and the diversity of its sources. I have a small wooden shelf for a very small number of prayer books, and I know there is space left for this one."
—Thomas Moore

"The prayers in this book are truly inspiring. They comfort, console, encourage and empower us in many different ways. For anyone who has the desire to pray, this book is an invaluable source."
—Henri Nouwen

Fellowship in Prayer has published for fifty years a bimonthly journal with a readership in over 60 countries. Each issue offers the spiritual insights, practices, and beliefs of women and men from a broad spectrum of the world's faith traditions.

With Andrew Harvey, Discussing the Life of the Soul

Linda Lamb

One of the true prophets and mystics of our time, a man dedicated to the life of prayer and to making God's love known and felt in the world, Andrew Harvey is far more than the "precocious academic, poet and novelist" whom the New York Times, the BBC, and the literary establishment so often celebrate. Even the critics who most write about his "intellectual and artistic genius" are sadly missing the point: They are failing to see the religious significance of his work. The truth is that a series of spiritual crises as genuine and shattering as anything Catherine of Genoa reported has transformed Harvey's early interests, writing, and even his *raison d'être* from the merely aesthetic to the authentically religious. When I interviewed him for Fellowship in Prayer, I felt in his presence what Kierkegaard meant by "transparency," the indefinable quality of one who has travelled all the way to the Light-giving Ground of Life, and returned to show others the way. His gentle spouse, the French photographer, Eryk Hanut, who has just completed a book on the Curé d' Ars, has the same quality.

A leading spokesman for the mystic renaissance that is bursting into flames throughout the West, Harvey returned our conversation again and again to the Christ-heart, the "Sacred heart" from which all love radiates. If we learn through prayer, he said, to live in and through and for that Holy Love, the world can still be saved from the massive forces of destruction unleashed by our century. I could not agree more.

Our discussion begins on the following page. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I did.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky

For a schedule of Harvey's talks in your area, you may telephone the California Institute of Integral Studies at 1 (415) 753-6100.

Loving Completely: An Interview with Andrew Harvey

In 1983, a brilliant young British poet and distinguished Shakespearian scholar by the name of Andrew Harvey published a book which has become a spiritual classic, A Journey in Ladakh, *the sensitive story of his initiation into Tibetan Buddhism. Today, at 42, he is quickly becoming a leading voice in the world of religion and spirituality.*

The youngest professor in the history of All Souls College at Oxford, Harvey renounced the security and prestige of a lifelong Oxford career to return at 25 to the land of his birth, India, in search of God, his own soul, and life's deeper realities. Travels to pilgrimage sites, meetings with truly "holy" men such as the Buddhist monk, Thuksey Rinpoche, and studies in the mystical literature of the world resulted in a number of highly respected religious writings. Hidden Journey *recounts the beginnings of his discovery of the Divine Feminine, and* Dialogues with a Modern Mystic *presents a maturing approach to central spiritual issues. Two ground-breaking volumes on the Sufi poet, Rumi, were followed last year by a book entitled* The Way of Passion: a Celebration of Rumi.*

In 1993, British television aired a documentary about Harvey's life, "The Making of A Mystic," and the World Parliament of Religions featured tapes of his interviews with the visionary monk, Bede Griffiths. Today, overflow crowds attend his public lectures and graduate courses at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco.

Two new books will appear this summer: The Return of the Mother, *and — in collaboration with the Jungian analyst, Anne Baring —* The Mystic Vision: Daily Encounters with the Divine, *a visually and spiritually beautiful Day Book of mystical passages (which will be reviewed in the next issue of* Fellowship in Prayer*).***

In the following interview with Fellowship in Prayer's Editor, Mary Ford-Grabowsky, Harvey speaks with the poetic, impassioned fluidity and brilliance for which he is renowned — and on topics which concern us all: the sacred feminine, human wholeness, freedom, the plight of the earth, and — most of all — love.

*The Way of Passion *is available on audio cassette and may be ordered from Audio Literature by telephoning the toll-free number: 1 (800) 841-2665.*

***You may order* The Return of the Mother *from Frog, Ltd. by calling 1 (800) 337-2665. To order* The Mystic Vision, *call Harper Collins at 1 (800) 331-3761.*

MFG: How did you acquire the ability to write so deeply about love?

AH: When I look back at my life I think love was surrounding my life from the very beginning. My own mother was a very loving person. I experienced feminine love through her and through the *Ayah* who looked after me as a child, and I felt the Divine Mother in India in the songs and smells and ecstatic sensual experiences of childhood, and I felt an overwhelming Divine presence in the jasmine and the lapis lazuli and in the legends of ancient India, and in the gods themselves — the gods that seemed so present, so aromatically present. I remember as a three-year-old child being very excited by a statue of Kali in the garden, excited by her wild arms and smile.

MFG: It's interesting to hear you say that your mother was loving, because in your book, *Hidden Journey*, you say that she abandoned you when you were a small child.

AH: She was loving, but she was trapped by her own childhood. She herself had been abandoned by her mother who never loved her and sent her to school when she was four. So she really didn't have any idea of how to bring up a child, how to give it mother love. What she managed to do despite that was to give me a sense of sweetness, of depth, and to tell rich and hilarious stories that awoke my imagination.

MFG: In what sense did she "abandon" you?

AH: I was sent off to school one thousand five hundred miles away and felt as if I had been permanently excluded from this edenic, blissful relationship that I had with her.

MFG: You wrote in *Hidden Journey* that her abandonment "baptized you in despair."

AH: My whole journey has had many baptisms of despair. I have lost many illusions, many worlds, many countries, and many friends and now in Meera's betrayal, I have lost the highest vision that one can have, of the guru.* That loss was the most frightful of all and the most painful. But all of these losses, all of these "baptisms in despair" were necessary to destroy the separations between me and the Divine Mother, to bring me into naked relationship with Her. Now I see that frightening and dramatic processes are actually a great blessing. Repeated

*Harvey was a disciple of Meera, a Hindu "guru" (spiritual teacher), in Germany

Eryk Hanut

Andrew Harvey

"baptisms in despair" force you to devote the whole of your being to discovering some fundamental reality that will not die and will not abandon.

MFG: So abandonment served as a way to the sacred — to God.

AH: I think this is how it happens in nearly every human life. It is always the sacred wound that initiates. It is always the central wound of one's life that provides that door or that window into the Divine. The whole of our life is a kind of fugue around that wound. I often think it takes the wound of incest or the wound of abandonment or the wound of exclusion or the wound of feeling mediocre to open the window. Dazzling and terrible fugal variations are played by the psyche on that wound until you have seen just how deep that wound goes — into all the aspects of your life — and you have begun to want to heal it — in the only way in which it can be healed, which is by direct contact with Divine Love. I am living that contact now in a way and in an intensity I have never lived before — with my beloved Eryk.

MFG: I gather that there was a long period between your "sacred baptism" at six and your conscious embracing of a spiritual path after Oxford.

AH: There was a lot more going on in the Oxford years than I was conscious of at the time. I was drawn to the Eastern section in the museum, and spent a lot of time contemplating the Buddhist and Hindu statues. At 18, I spent almost eight months in Italy looking at the religious paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. I wrote four detailed notebooks about Michelangelo and Caravaggio and the major artists of the *Quatrocentro,* and I realized recently looking back at those notebooks that although I was pretending to be distant from Mary and Christ, I was receiving an immense amount of spiritual, mystical education through being in contemplation before those paintings and those sculptures for hours every day.

MFG: So art was more than an aesthetic experience for you even then.

AH: There was no aesthetic experience. It was an experience of the Divine.

MFG: Art became sacred art.

AH: It did. And it changed my life. At about twenty-four, I spent a month and a half in Delphi. I lived in the ruins. I camped out in the ruins. I didn't stay in a hotel. I lived as a wild man in the olive groves. I was recovering from a bad love affair and was exposing myself to the elements and to the genius loci and asking to be healed. I had a series of dreams about a saint of the locality named Ossias Lukas and wrote a series of poems about him. And I had a very, very strange synchronistic experience one day when I was sitting on a tomb. An old woman and her daughter visited me. It was made clear to me in the way that the experiences materialized that I was being visited by figures of Demeter and Persephone, who were bringing herbs of healing and love to me. It was very much as if by camping out in Delphi, I was really giving myself to this place, and the place was unveiling some of its sacred splendor.

> The Beatitudes . . . are the greatest, noblest, purest, wildest, most radical statement of the power of the Sacred Feminine that has ever been given to human beings.

On looking back on that period, I realize, too, that I was also being educated into the divine power of Mary, because when I was

twenty-four and twenty-five I went to live on a Greek island with a girlfriend of mine. We had a platonic love, but it was deep. One evening we were walking up the island, up into the ruined shrine at the top of it — it was a very beautiful evening — and suddenly we both felt a vast Divine force of peace and calm descend. It was strange, because I had been trying to leave the island for days, but the island had been buffeted by storms. The boat in which I was going to leave was called the "Mania," which in Greek means "madness." The next day after this experience, the storm cleared suddenly, I was able to leave, and the boat was called "Maria." "Maria." I knew at that moment that I was being given a clue and a hint.

MFG: So you knew rather early on that your journey had to do with the Feminine Divine.

AH: Yes, because two months later I found myself in Ephesus. I was wandering in Greece and Turkey at the time. I went to Ephesus specifically to see the place where Mary had lived before the Assumption. I stayed up in the shrine for two or three days with a wonderful old Jesuit priest who lived surrounded by chickens and *National Geographic* magazines. He was my first real guide into Mary. He said that the wonderful thing about Mary is that nobody knows anything about her. There is so little to "know" about her — which is the whole point.

MFG: Not much more than the Magnificat.

AH: And the few things in Luke. But Mary is discovered by everyone who takes the true adventure into God. Mary is the Mother aspect of God incarnated in time. The old Jesuit said, "Mary isn't just the mother of Christ, Mary is the Divine Mother, but don't tell anybody, and certainly don't tell anybody that I told you, because I would be excommunicated and burnt at the stake, at least!" He also said Mary is the supreme secret of Christianity, known far more by simple people and mystics than by cardinals or theologians.

MFG: Would you elaborate on what you mean by "Divine Mother"?

AH: The Divine Mother is the primal creative energy of the universe. Ramakrishna, the nineteenth century Hindu sage, says that Brahman, the source, and Shakti, the primal energy, are two aspects of the same thing. Brahman is God in the state of blissful repose, and is "mascu-

Janet Gnall

line" in Hinduism. Shakti is the creative power that is ceaselessly emanating from that peace. Brahman is the diamond, Shakti is the shining of the diamond. Brahman is the Source of love and Shakti is the "loving" of love — this "loving" that creates the worlds, the grasses, bodies, sexuality, emotions, feelings, thoughts, everything in the universe.

MFG: This is like Meister Eckhart's distinction between the Godhead and God.

AH: I think it is very similar to that. It's very similar also to what Hildegard of Bingen means when she talks about the "greening," the *viriditas* of things. Shakti, the Divine Mother, is the *viriditas* of things — that flame-fire that "greens" all creation. Hildegard's poems to the Holy Spirit are very much poems to the Divine Mother, as are of course her great poems to Mary.

MFG: Hildegard sees the three persons of the Trinity and Mary as green.

AH: And she says to Mary: "O Greening branch, you stand in your nobility, like the rising dawn, hold out your hand to raise us up." The true depths of Christianity will only reveal themselves when Mary is seen and known as the Divine Mother, and Christ is seen and known as much as the Son of the Mother as of the Father. For to really understand Mary and her role, Christians will have to go back to the roots of Christianity and see Christ as the sacred androgyne, as the one who, in his own being, fused masculine and feminine. They would have to see the Beatitudes as what they are — the greatest, noblest, purest, wildest, most radical statement of the power of the Sacred Feminine that has ever been given to human beings. They would have really to see Christ, as I have said, not just as the Son of the Father, but as the Son of the Mother, her most loving and concerned son. And they would have to understand really that Christ could not have been what he was without having the Mother that he had. She communicates to him her totally awake and loving heart. As Saint Bridget of Sweden said, " Adam and Eve sold the world for an apple: Mary and her son redeemed it with, as it were, *one heart.*"

MFG: I don't quite understand why you put the Beatitudes in this context.

AH: The Beatitudes represent the wisdom of the Mother, the humble, paradoxical knowledge of the Mother's way. "Blessed are they who

mourn, for they shall be comforted." "Blessed are the poor in heart." "Blessed are the peacemakers." The virtues Christ is celebrating are all *feminine* virtues — patience, endurance, treating life with sacred tenderness and honoring the Divinity — in even your enemies. That is a purely Mother creed — and has nothing to do with authority or power of any kind. I think that Christ's relationship with the Absolute through his Mother and through his Father gave him the complete Mother-Father vision, a vision that fuses the transcendent and immanent, love and justice, contemplation and radical action, the law of the Father and the mercy of the Mother. I think you see this Christ most of all in John's gospel, but also very beautifully in the apocryphal gospels, especially in Logion 22.

MFG: What does Logion 22 say?

AH: "When you make the two one, and when you make the inner as the outer, and the outer as the inner, and the above as the below, and when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male shall not be male, and the female not be female . . . then you shall enter the kingdom." This amazing and profound saying is a clue to the whole power — the alchemical power and force — of the Christ process, the Christ transformation.

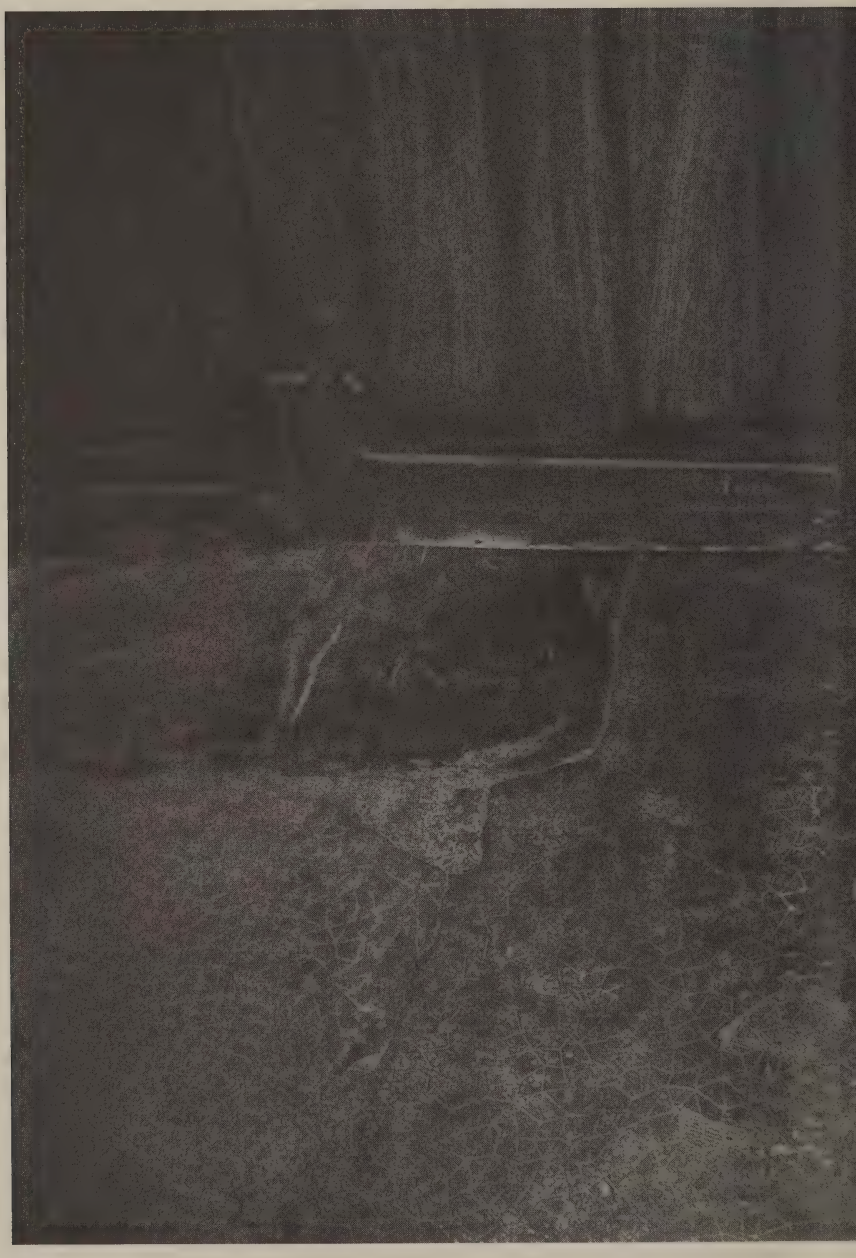
MFG: It's interesting that Christianity doesn't teach that.

AH: It's because of the fear of the feminine, the fear of the body, the fear of sexuality, the fear of women. All of which was institutionalized very early in the existing books of the gospels and in Paul — who in one side of himself is of course an astonishing mystic and an astonishing human being with great courage, but in another side of himself is clearly frightened of the body and of eros.

My own feeling is that Christ was a completely realized being — the total androgyne, the one who combined in his being masculine and feminine and heaven and earth, and realized the full alchemical secret — which is why he could go through the crucifixion, be torn apart, be reborn in the same Mother and be resurrected.

> Christ could not have been what he was without having the Mother he had. She communicates to him her totally awake and loving heart.

MFG: What do you mean by "the alchemical secret"?



Eryk Hanut

AH: The alchemical secret is very simply the power of love. Love in *every* dimension. The fusing, infusing, uniting, immensely pregnant and Divine power of love. Not *Divine* love, but love. Because *all* love is Divine. All real, true love is Divine. And Christ became that diamond of love that radiated in charity and force throughout the world. But that force of love that he is was "interpreted" — because the phenomenon was too large and too revolutionary for people to comprehend.

The alchemical secret is simply the power of love. Love in *every* dimension. The fusing, infusing, uniting, immensely pregnant and Divine power of love. Not *Divine* love, but love. Because *all* love is Divine. All real, true love is Divine.

When I really look at Christ, what I see more and more is the life of the sacred lover. The child of the Father-Mother who is attuned to all aspects of reality, who reveres reality, who passionately wants justice and peace to reign on this earth — not in some other place — and who because of his own purity, can enter fearlessly into the power of love and love completely. And loving completely means erotically, emotionally, spiritually and mystically — all at the same time and all with the one power of love which brings about the alchemical fusion of heaven and earth, crucifixion and resurrection.

I think Christ's secret of fusion — which destroys conventional religious categories — was too much for everybody. Too immense, too shocking. But it is the only fusion that can actually create, in a living being, the force of passion that is necessary to break through all the barriers and boundaries between people. Unless that transcendent and immanent eros is present, and unless it is present and consecrated, and unless it is present, consecrated and fused at all dimensions, then this passion — which is the Christ passion — the one force that can radically transform you — simply cannot be there in its full strength. And the church's cutting off of the body from the spirit ensured that passion couldn't be there. It also ensured that people couldn't get to that full Christ power — that full Christ energy, that Christ passion — and therefore discover their own wild and radical freedom from exploitation or authority of any kind.

The patriarchy needed to keep people away from this power because

this power is the force — this power of love is the force — that destroys all barriers of all kinds, and makes people free from all power whatsoever. It is the power that destroys power, that destroys prayer and action, the barriers between body and spirit, between heaven and earth, between prayer and action, between mysticism and justice, the power that initiates everyone directly in the ground of ordinary life and their divinity and the divinity of all other beings and the cosmos.

The vast power of released love — the Christ love-power and its astonishing force of freedom — *that* is the alchemical secret.

MFG: The sacred knowledge we're not supposed to know! But all of the major religions would say to you, "This is a very beautiful vision, and we cherish it in certain individuals in whom it has broken through, but if that kind of love were set free in society, the result would be chaos. All you would have is free individuals running amok."

AH: This is the old argument which has kept mankind enslaved. Nobody has ever said it better than Dostoevski in his parable of "The Grand Inquisitor." The inquisitor is an ancient, ruthless, shrewd, infinitely worn man in his late 90's. He is in his study and a beautiful young man in his late 20's or early 30's is brought into the room, and he immediately recognizes this young man as Christ. For the rest of the parable, Christ says nothing. The Grand Inquisitor rages at Christ and says to him, "You came, and gave us this terrifying message of freedom, of absolute love, of absolute nakedness, of total responsiveness to the Divine in the human, and we can't bear it. Human beings cannot bear it, cannot live it — which is why the church was created, to give people order, to give people rules, to give people also some minute obligations which render chaos comprehensible, and that is why" — he ends this tirade by saying — "and that is why I am sending you out now to be crucified."

Dostoevski is dramatizing the eternal dialogue between order and love. We have come to a moment where we can no longer afford the wisdom of the Grand Inquisitor, because it is that wisdom — that limited, depressed wisdom — that is preventing us all from developing in ourselves precisely the kind of vivid and focussed sacred passion that we all now need to be able to preserve the planet. When these so-called wise beings say, "This is a very beautiful vision, but only a few people are capable of it — and if everybody were capable of it, there would

be anarchy," these "wise" beings are actually saying: "We don't want you to get to this overwhelming secret. We don't want you to have it, because that would mean the end of our systems of hierarchy. That would be the end of our need to have elitist systems. That would mean the end of the priesthood, the monastic system, the master system: all the ways of male domination of religion." It would mean that the sacred democracy of Christ was finally, finally put into practice by the release of the supreme tantric, alchemical secret of the unifying, violent, pure, sweet power of love.

Unless we have that vision now, unless we get to it, unless it is given to the whole world, the world will not be preserved — because it is precisely and only that passion that can give people everywhere a vision of where they are in the Divine world, in the Divine body — living the Divine, ordinary, glorious, humble, day-by-day Divine experience. It is only that vision of the total sacrality of life and of nature that can save the planet at this moment, because we need to be able to galvanize ourselves at every level, especially on the political level. These rulers, these wise — so-called "wise" patriarchs — aren't wise at all. They are drunk on the old wine, and they haven't woken up to the wild beauty of the new wine that the Divine light and the Divine Mother are pouring out for the salvation of the world at this moment.

> The true depths of Christianity will only reveal themselves when Mary is seen and known as the Divine Mother, and Christ is seen and known as much as the Son of the Mother as of the Father.

This revelation is certainly not mine. It is coming through in Teilhard de Chardin. It is coming through in Aurobindo. It is coming through in many different ways and voices and philosophies. The disaster, the catastrophe, that we are facing — which has come about partly because of our limiting of this power of love — the power of love that the Buddha tried to give us, the power of love that the Christ tried to give us, the power of love that Krishna tried to give us, the power of love that Saint Francis tried to give us, this immense power of love that actually fuses in one passion all activities in all dimensions. Because of our refusal to live this one love — we are being brought to the moment where we are destroying the very place where we live. At this terrible moment the Divine mercy — the Divine love of the Di-

Cliff Moore

vine Mother — is streaming towards the world in a vast grace of direct initiation — so that people can wake up fast and not only *claim* their Divinity directly, but also *enact* the laws of love and justice in every arena to transform everything. When we discover the power of this one love, we will have the power, too, to remake all things in its living image.

MFG: You remind me of a beautiful passage in Teilhard de Chardin that I love: "Someday after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity, we shall harness the energies of love, and then for the second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered fire."

AH: Exactly! The fire that Teilhard de Chardin is talking about is nothing less than the fire of the sacred heart of Christ and the fire of the sacred heart of his beloved Mother. In this fire, all things are made new, and in and by this fire the world can be re-fashioned in the likeness of Christ and Mary's passion for justice at all levels — justice for all sentient beings, for nature, for women, for homosexuals, for the whole world and all its holy creatures.

MFG: Part of the message in your writings and lectures seems to be that everyone has the potential to take part in the West's discovery of its mystical soul by unveiling the mystic inside themselves. Are you saying that everyone is a mystic?

AH: There is definitely, without doubt, a mystic in everyone. Everyone without any shadow of a doubt has mystical experiences, God comes to people in food, in friendship, in marvelous experiences in music, in amazing openings from reading books, in numinous dreams. Because the culture is so degraded, no one is given permission to claim that these are genuine glimpses, genuine signs of Divine identity. Every adolescent knows when their heart opens in adoration towards another being — knows for a moment, at that moment that the heart is open — something of the glory of Divine love. Life is naturally sacred, entirely holy. Traherne wrote: "The world is a mirror of infinite beauty, yet no one sees it . . . It is the paradise of God. To see that beauty, that paradise, to see it really is to devote everything you have to the living out of its laws of holy compassion in reality, and to work with the alchemical power of the sacred heart for the establishment of the holy kingdom. As Christ said in the Gospel of Thomas in Logion 113: 'The kingdom . . . is spread upon the earth, and men do not see it." On whether or not we can see it, and act from our seeing, and act wisely, passionately — and fast — depends the future of our planet.

MFG: Thank you.

In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from heaven will break upon us.

Luke 1:78

Hast thou not seen how all in the heavens and in the earth uttereth the praise of God? The very birds as they spread their wings? Every creature knoweth its prayer and its praise.

The Qur'an

The teachings are immeasurable: I vow to study and practice them. The way is very long: I vow to arrive at the end.

From the Vow of the Boddhisattva.

Acquire kindliness.

Asim al-Antaki

The Buddha has proclaimed that all dangers and fears, and the innumerable sufferings, arise only from the mind.

Tibetan wisdom

What predominates in the hearts of the mystics while they are at prayer is their sense of the mystery of The One in whose presence we stand, and the power of The One whom we seek, and the love of the God who favors us with intimate dialogue. And they are conscious of that while they are praying, and they depart from prayer with a face so changed that their friends do not recognize them, because of the awe that they feel at the magnificence of The Holy One.

Asad al-Muhasibi

Proclaim with me the greatness of Jahweh,
let us together extol God's name.
I seek Jahweh, and he answers me
and frees me from all my fears.

Psalm 34:3-4

It is woven
into the tapestry
of the meadow
with blue threads of rain—
the wild iris.

June Moreau

Everything Depends on Your Peace

THICH NHAT HANH

We need to find an inner peace which makes it possible for us to become one with those who suffer, and to do something to help our brothers and sisters, which is to say, ourselves. I know many young people who are aware of the real situation of the world and who are filled with compassion. They refuse to hide themselves in artificial peace, and they engage in the world in order to change the society. They know what they want, yet after a period of involvement they become discouraged. Why? It is because they lack deep, inner peace, the kind of peace they can take with them into their life of action. Our strength is not in weapons, money, or power. Our strength is in our peace, the peace within us. This peace makes us indestructible. We must have peace while taking care of those we love and those we want to protect.

This kind of peace brings you into the world and empowers you to undertake whatever you want to do to try to help.

I have recognized this peace in many, many people. Most of their time and effort is spent protecting the weak, watering the trees of love and understanding everywhere. They belong to various religious and cultural backgrounds. I do not know how each of them came to their inner peace, but I have seen it in them. If you are attentive, I am sure you will see it too. This peace is not a barricade which separates you from the world. On the contrary, this kind of peace brings you into the world and empowers you to undertake whatever you want to do to try to help — struggling for social justice, lessening the disparity between the rich and the poor, stopping the arms race, fighting against discrimination, and sowing more seeds of understanding, reconciliation, and compassion. In any struggle, you need determination and patience. This determination will dissipate if you lack peace.

This selection is taken from The Sun My Heart *(Parallax Press, Berkeley, CA, 1988).*

Robert F. Campbell

The Reversal of Violence

WAYNE TEASDALE

Only spiritual practice can put an end to violence.

Last year alone there were some 55,000 deaths from guns, and drive-by, random shootings have become commonplace in out cities. Children carry guns to school and threaten other children or teachers without any thought. People no longer feel as secure in their homes as in former times, and the streets of our cities have fallen to the tyranny of intimidation and fear. America has created a culture of violence, and most of us have also chosen this "culture" by our complicity with and acquiescence in what the media produces to "entertain" and "inform" us. We readily, almost gleefully applaud all the violence dished out in movie after movie. The *Alien, Predator* series, and *The Silence of the Lambs* are but a few examples of this genre taken to a high art.

What is it in us that so craves this twisted sort of excitement? Are we as a species trapped in our own violence? Is there no hope for us? The reason we are so attached to and fascinated by violence in all its forms is because we have learned to be so. It is not natural to our species, or any other species. This is the conclusion of an international team of scientists, sponsored by the United Nations in a study in 1986, culminating in *The Seville Statement on Violence*. This document was formally adopted by UNESCO in 1989, and it offers the hope that we can create a culture of peace, because war and all other forms of violence are not innate to us. Through education we can unlearn all the habits of aggressivity that we've picked up over the millennia.

We can create a culture of peace, because war and all other forms of violence are not innate to us.

There is in our time a large and growing movement among the religions, and other segments of culture, such as education, the sciences,

A world famous Christian monk whose spiritual practices and teachings embrace the mystical traditions of East and West, Brother Wayne Teasdale, Ph.D. is the author of Essays in Mysticism *and* Towards a Christian Vedanta, *and is a member of the Boards of Trustees of the Parliament of the Worlds' Religions and of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.*

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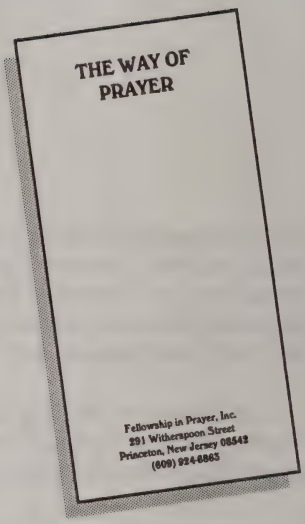

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What would you like to tell us about your spiritual needs, desires, experiences? About *Fellowship in Prayer*? Use the space below!

Reversing violence: Wayne Teasdale and the Dalai Lama

and the arts, to build a new civilization in which the institution of war and all forms of violent behavior are no more. There are such documents as the *Universal Declaration on Nonviolence,* developed by the Roman Catholic group, Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, and the Dalai Lama. There is also *Towards a Global Ethic,* the declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions, which identified a number of elements that all the religions share on the ethical level. It is the first statement of its kind to suggest that a universal consensus on moral life is possible. Then there is the more recent statement of UNESCO, entitled *Declaration on the Role of Religion in the Promotion of a Culture of Peace.* All of these multifaith attempts, and many more as well, are working towards the breakdown of the old system of domination and control that has propelled the human race into thousands of wars throughout history.

These documents are like milestones, and we will look back to them to measure our progress up the road of history. They set aside the cultural and religious support system for war, terrorism, and persecution. Internally within our societies we must get control of the process of manufacturing violent images by showing clearly the correlation between media excess and the effects in our cities. We must call the media to accountability. The media specialists know very well the power of images; they have mastered the *psychology of advertising,* and realize the impact an image can have on behavior, especially with unstable persons. We have to call the media to honesty!

Spirituality is ultimately about sensitivity.

Our greatest resource, however, in reversing the effects of this violent culture, and changing it into a culture of peace, comes from spirituality, and all that that rich term implies. Spirituality can bring about a radical inner change in the human family as it is allowed to take root in the lives of people. Profoundly transformative, it can dissolve the destructive patterns of the culture of violence which have held us captive for so long a time. Spirituality, as the inner yearning of the heart for the Divine, for the Real, awakens in us openness, gentleness, patience, deep reverence for all life forms, including the earth, intense compassion for all sentient beings, and an all-inclusive love, *agape,* that embraces the totality.

Peter G. Haskell

Spirituality schools us in these virtues by making us *feel* them. We naturally come upon them as our inner life awakens and is transformed by divine grace. Spirituality makes us completely nonviolent in every sense, and it establishes us in an extraordinary kind of sensitivity. It is difficult to put this insight into words, but spirituality is ultimately about sensitivity. And compassion — love — is this *sensitivity* expressed in our historical experience in the world's religions, particularly in Buddhism and Christianity. When this gift of divine sensitivity dawns in our lives, then we notice all beings around us and become conscious of their struggles, conflicts, and — especially — their suffering. We then desire to free them from their suffering, or even to take it upon ourselves, like Christ himself. That is what this sensitivity does to us.

It is through our spiritual discipline over time that spirituality as transformative into divine sensitivity unfolds. For example through our meditation or chanting practice, selfless service, and devotion — the intense and deep self-knowledge in which we discover that we cannot hide from the Divine.

The spiritual journey extracts its price from us; it costs as T.S. Elliot knew so well, "precisely everything." Indeed, unless it costs us everything, it isn't real. Put another way, spirituality demands a total surrender to God in trust. Nothing less will do! Surrender and trust are what make possible our readiness to receive greater gifts from the divine treasury of mystical graces.

Each one of us must surrender to our own call to inner transformation into divine love and compassion. That is a great part of what life is all about, and what the nature of the human vocation entails. Life is like a school where we learn how to love, how to care, how to become truly sensitive to all beings. The scriptures, sacred texts and holy books of the various religions are our textbooks, and the great founders of the traditions, the *rishis* in ancient India, Mahvira and Buddha, also from the subcontinent, Zoroaster in Persia, Confucius and Lao-tzu in China, the prophets in Israel, Jesus, Mohammed, and the countless shamans are all our teachers in learning how to love. In the end, it is only when we begin to love as a people, as a community, that we abandon the culture of violence for the culture of peace. May that day soon be upon us.

Reunion

O God, my Master, should I gain the grace
To see you face to face when life is ended,
Grant that a little dog, who once pretended
That I was God, may see me face to face.
Francis Jammes

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing dismay you.
All things pass.
God never changes.
Patience attains
all that it strives for.
One who has God
Finds nothing lacking.
God alone suffices.
Saint Teresa of Avila

Thou

Wherever I go—only Thou!
Wherever I stand—only Thou!
Just Thou; again Thou; always Thou!
Early Hasidic Song

O Lord, show me your true face
and mine
before I die.
From a prayer by Lama Surya Das

For Sleeping

God, save us.
God, hide us.
When we sleep, God do not sleep.
If we sleep, God do not get drowsy.

These prayers have been taken from The Gift of Prayer - A Treasury of Personal Prayers from the World's Spiritual Traditions, *a Fellowship in Prayer book, to be in bookstores in October. Over 400 classic and contemporary prayers. $19.95 hard cover.*

Tom Dunham

Tie us around you arm, God,
like a bracelet.
Samburu people of Kenya

God be in my head
and in my thinking
God be in my eyes
and in my looking
God be in my mouth
and in my speaking
God be in my heart
and in my understanding,
that I may treat all beings
with loving kindness
this day
and all the days of my life.
Adapted from private service book, Clare College, Cambridge, 1514

From All Who Once Were Children

O God! Take this my prayer
And touch all unhappy children
Everywhere.
Anonymous

Let there be peace in the sky
and in the air,
peace in the plant world
and in the forests;
let the cosmic powers be peaceful;
let Brahma be peaceful;
let there be undiluted and
fulfilling peace everywhere.
Atharvaveda

A Meditation on Prayer

ROBERT GRANAT

Chanting the Lord's Prayer during his morning prayer time, a seasoned meditator "hears" a new question.

In an ideal meditation we don't think about anything. This monkey mind ceases its usual jumping and chattering and settles like a babe into the quiet arms of Isness. Ideal, however, is an adjective the dictionary defines as "imaginary, existing only as a concept." How sad but how true. We'd better face up to it: in this body, in this mind, in this world, things are never ever ideal.

Almost never anyway. In actual experiential fact, our situation's not quite that bad. With patient persistence, purpose and practice, we can approach ideality, even reach, touch, realize it for a timeless moment of bliss. This we learn, along with everything else of real importance, from the closest and most faithful of our teachers: existence itself. And learn too, later rather than sooner, "to kiss the joy as it flies," to let the winged life depart as freely as it alighted.

But for most of us, such visitations are rare. What happened yesterday was more typical. I was nicely into my morning sitting practice, growing pleasantly thoughtless of anything, when I gradually became aware of something. A low murmuring, a voice whispering, slightly below and to the left of wherever I then was. My cerebrum, of course. Cerebrating, doing its thing. Thinking again, and rather insistently too, about. . .what? About prayer this time, about the Lord's Prayer in particular. I responded to this intrusion as one is supposed to respond: adult to child. I listened, I observed, but I didn't leap on board its train of thought. And sure enough, after a few minutes, like a facial itch, it died quietly away.

But a little later, back again in the phenomenal world, I heard it once more, the same unmistakable sounds of thought. And in the phenomenal world, one learns — had better learn — it's wise to pay attention to incoming phenomena. You could be hit by a car if you don't. And so I fine-tuned my receiver to the present phenomenon, my brain's ongoing talk show, and I listened to what it had to say

A freelance writer particularly known for his publications on the spiritual life, Robert Granat makes his home in Alcalde, NM.

about prayer, about the Lord's Prayer in particular. And was surprised to hear it raising a question which had never once entered my head before: How come Jesus, right before revealing the great prayer, warns us not to "heap up empty phrases" in praying, because "your Father knows what you need before you ask Him" — and then immediately goes on to tell us to ask for what we need.

Strange. I thought I knew the Lord's Prayer backwards and forwards. I'd memorized it not long after I memorized my own name. My mouth has intoned it, as have billions of other human mouths, countless thousands of times. I chanted it an hour ago, since it forms part of the ecumenical do-it-yourself liturgy that precedes my morning practice. I've had a lifetime to analyze it, study commentaries on it, even write my own — all of which I've done. Nevertheless this question shone newly minted, a bright cerebral surprise. Not that this in itself was so unusual. Parts of me are always surprising other parts.

My mind, as it habitually does, went on to answer its own question. And this is what I heard it say:

> God, being God, doesn't need prayers — or anything else for that matter. We, being we, do need them.

"Jesus was right, or course — he's invariably right on such matters. Omniscience does indeed know everything, including what we human beings — along with all our cousins, the other myriad creatures — really need, even though we ourselves might not. God, being God, doesn't need prayers — or anything else for that matter. We, being we, do need them, however. Why? To keep us on course, like a compass, to keep us mindful of who we really are and where we're really heading. Need them because, as we all know, we belong to an easily distractable species — an atavistic holdover, no doubt, from our long simian past. We keep forgetting things, the important things especially. We even forget the one thing that is necessary: we forget our own true nature. We can't remember our Original Face. Forget we're Buddha, Atman-Braman, Children of the Most High, the Most High ourselves, at One with the One. And forgetting our true nature, we lose our true way. Lose our little way and lose The Great Way, wander around, go backwards, start behaving like beasts again—forgive me, beasts, far worse than you at your beastliest. We continue to betray our own birthright,

Tom Dunham

producing still more of what Goethe, long before Auschwitz, called the most terrifying thing on earth: active human ignorance.

"The capacity to pray has been given to us alone; our unique evolutionary gift. It's the amazing genetic grace that came like a precious balm to heal the sin-sick soul, the wounding insight into our temporality, contingency and death. Human prayer, therefore, is a reaching out from this tiny self of our separation toward the Great Self of our identity, that is nameless and limitless and the same for us all. A reaching out for the only Truth that can and will set us free, free to live and to die as we should, to love our neighbor, even our enemy, as ourself—and thus realize the most sublime and glorious of all human ideals. Glorious and, alas, utterly impossible. Impossible to selves. Because the walls between this comparted self and all other comparted selves can never be breached. Yet possible nonetheless. Not by forcing ourselves to pretend those selves are actually our own self (they are not). Because we are all the Self and Self is Self. We are that we are!"

The capacity to pray has been given to us alone; our unique evolutionary gift.

The voice of my cerebrum stopped and grew silent. It seemed to stand there like an exhausted athlete, looking up at me, as if for judgment, for applause.

I couldn't help but give it. The voice of thought had risen to a rare and unexpected eloquence this time — for me anyway. It had even touched off sympathetic vibrations from centers in other parts of the brain. I could feel that in my pulse. Reason had done a good job of it . . . as far as it went.

Which, as always, was not far enough. The mosaic brain can lead us to the promised land, but it cannot enter.

This took place yesterday morning. Today my sitting was different. No interruptions.

Love After Love

The time will come
when, with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's welcome

and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you have ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

Derek Walcott

O my Lord,
the stars glitter
and the eyes of men are closed.
Kings have locked their doors
and each lover is alone with his love.

Here, I am alone with You.

Rabi'a (Translated by Jane Hirshfield)

"Love After Love" from Collected Poems 1948-1984 *by Derek Walcott. Copyright ©1986 by Derek Walcott. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, Inc. Rabia's poem comes from Jane Hirshfield's book,* Women in Praise of the Sacred, *reviewed on page 46 of this issue of* Fellowship in Prayer.

Coincidence Or A Father's Last Gift?

F. VERNON CHANDLER

A dream brings a profound, surprising lesson.

It was Monday afternoon, November 8. I was sitting in my office at the Wayne County Mental Health Center. On my desk were several stacks of client records. I had been supplementing my part-time parish ministry income by working as a counselor at this Goldsboro, North Carolina facility.

This was to be my last week at Wayne County Mental Health Center. Most of my remaining work involved record keeping. I was scheduled to begin a new joy as a chaplain with the South Carolina Department of Corrections the following week.

It seems that I rather suddenly became unusually sleepy that afternoon. I just couldn't seem to keep my eyes open. Finally, I closed my office door and decided to take a short nap. Although I had occasionally taken a 5-10 minute nap during my lunch break, this was the first time I ever risked a nap during working hours. I only intended to sleep a few minutes.

Moments later I was in the midst of a most vivid dream. The characters in the dream were animated in cartoon fashion. My focus in the dream was upon a crippled grasshopper slowly moving along a highway. The grasshopper appeared to be weak and dying. It made a few short movements and then it fell still to the pavement. As I observed the motionless grasshopper, my attention was drawn into an electrical power line running adjacent to the highway. Sitting upon the power line was a very colorful and vibrant bumblebee. The bumblebee appeared to be smiling. Immediately, it occurred to me that what had been the grasshopper was now the bumblebee.

"So, this is what happens at death." I reflected as I continued to dream. "We simply take on a different form and body."

Suddenly, I was awakened. The vividness of the dream was unusual. The simple message of the dream was profound.

"What a strange dream!" I thought as I recalled the animated cartoon caricature of a smiling bumblebee looking toward me from atop

F. Vernon Chandler, a Unitarian Universalist minister, is a chaplain with the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

the power line. I tried to remember what had preceded the crippled grasshopper in my dream, but could not recall any memory prior to that of seeing the old crippled grasshopper slowly dying on the highway pavement.

As I sat in my chair reflecting upon this unusual dream, I felt an urge to telephone my father. Remembering that I had talked with my father the previous Saturday, I decided against trying to call him. That telephone call had been one of our best telephone visits in years. My father, a retired United Methodist minister, had just returned to Waterloo, South Carolina after a week's vacation at Myrtle Beach. We talked about his health. My father's health had deteriorated over the past two years due to heart and kidney disease. With much excitement, I told him about the Victorian house my wife and I were in the process of purchasing in the small town of Clio, South Carolina. He had shared my enthusiasm. He was looking forward to making a trip to see me as soon as we were settled into our new home.

Instead of telephoning my father, I decided to place a call to my mother. My mother and father divorced in 1982 after 32 years of marriage. The bitterness that marked their separation and divorce had given way to forgiveness. During the past several years, they both spoke with concern and caring for the other during my visits to their respective homes.

As I retrieved my MCI calling card from my wallet, I realized that calling my mother from work was out of character for me. Rarely do I make a personal long distance call prior to 5 p.m. unless it is an emergency. But, I decided to call anyway.

"Hello!" It was my mother's voice on the other end of the line.

"Hey, Mom, this is Vernie. Don't be alarmed. I know this is an odd time to be calling, but I had a few minutes and just wanted to give you a call."

My mother and I visited for several minutes. Neither one of us had any major news to share with the other.

It was later that evening that I would learn of my father's death. Frances, my step-mother was driving him to a 4 p.m. medical appointment when he died. Apparently, his death was rather sudden and without pain. Frances became alarmed when my father dropped the bottles of medicine he had been carrying in his lap. He appeared to be sleeping. When he failed to respond to her shouts and her hand shaking his shoulder, Frances used their cellular phone to notify the highway patrol that they were proceeding directly to the hospital. Attempts to revive my father on the emergency room ramp were unsuccessful. My father was pronounced dead a few minutes after arriving at Self Memorial Hospital in Greenwood.

My first reaction was acute grief. It was later the next day that I recalled my vivid dream on the afternoon of my father's death. Was my dream a coincidence or might it have been something more? I could not remember what time it was when I took my brief office nap. It might have been as early as 3 p.m. or as late as 4 p.m. However, I did know that the call to my mother was within two or three minutes of awaking. My father became unconscious in the car sometime between 3:30 and 3:50 p.m.

> It was obvious that my vivid dream . . . took place as my father was dying.

It would be several weeks later before I received the telephone bill indicating the time of my call to my mother. Meanwhile, I asked frances to send me the time of her call to the highway patrol. When I finally was able to compare the recorded times for the two calls, I was shocked.

There was only one minute of time between the two calls. The call to the highway patrol was at 3:43 p.m. and the call to my mother was at 3:44 p.m. It was obvious that my vivid dream of the dying grasshopper and the smiling bumblebee took place as my father was dying.

Coincidence? I think not? The dream has come to have a very special meaning for me. Its message? The immortality of the human soul.

I've come to believe that the dream — and its message — was my father's last gift to his eldest son.

Mapping the Journey

G. SHERMAN MORRISON

Please send the story of your experience with "spirituality and everyday life" to the Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. You do not need to be a professional writer.

When a friend and I received an invitation to spend the weekend at a beach in southern New Jersey, we immediately accepted, looking forward to a break from the hectic pace of life in Washington, D.C. Feeling a bit adventurous, we decided to make the trip without a map. We left for the beach around 6:00 p.m., expecting to arrive by 9:00 p.m., but when you travel from Washington to southern New Jersey via New York City, you arrive at about 3:30 am. You then spend most of the next day catching up on sleep — after purchasing a map, of course. The moral of the story is simple: When travelling in unfamiliar territory, take a map.

For all of us, each day is new and unfamiliar territory, despite the routines we engage in to lend it a modicum of security and continuity. Just as we need maps to travel geographically from place to place, so we need maps for daily life. Thinkers throughout the ages have offered maps to help people find their way — some ultimate value that could provide a context or backdrop for life's journey. Aristotle wrote about happiness, which included a large degree of self-realization — but as a candidate for final value, it leaves one feeling a bit self-centered. C.S. Peirce and many other Christians stressed *agape,* or selfless love — but then one must also have a certain focus on the self. For Camus, human solidarity was crucial — but there's more to life than just human life: plants and animals also deserve consideration. Albert Schweitzer suggested "reverence for life" as a final value — but one might wonder about the importance of inanimate objects like rocks and water. William Temple believed God to be the ultimate value — but there are all the other aspects of creation mentioned above.

When a close examination of a life map leaves one asking the question, "Yes, but what about . . . " then we need to look for something more inclusive, more holistic.

G. Sherman Morrison organizes activities for the North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology, a non-profit organization whose mission is to help the religious community become more involved in caring for creation.

Robert F. Campbell

Life is complex, to be sure, but a simple map can be an invaluable aid in finding one's way. I began my own map with a dot to represent the Divine immanent within me. Around that dot I drew a small circle (a wonderful symbol of unity), to represent myself, and called it the psychological realm of existence. It is here that I explore the interrelationship of my mind, body, soul and spirit, and try to harmonize these different aspects of myself. I drew another circle around the first to represent the sociological realm of existence. It is here that I recognize how my own existence is embedded within a context of other human beings. I therefore explore my relationship to my family, friends, the neighborhood in which I live, and the religious community of which I am a part.

I added another ring around the first two and called it the ecological realm of existence. Reflecting on this, I recognize that my own life, and the lives of all men and women, are dependent upon healthy ecosystems, which include not only plants and animals, but soil, rocks, water, air, and energy.

Finally I added one more concentric circle around all the others and called it the realm of Divine transcendence. I had begun with the Divine as immanent in my own soul, at the very core of individual existence. As the outermost circle, the Divine is also transcendent, greater than all that exists, encompassing all that exists. The individual, human society, and all of nature lie within the scope of the transcendent Divine, but are also infused with the immanent presence of God.

It is this simple map of four concentric circles which I continually use to find my way. It helps me recognize where I am and to account for everything to which I am related. The circles remind me of the need to be aware of the harmonious unity between these seemingly disparate aspects of life and to recognize that each aspect is embedded within and related to the others.

I believe that each of us is using a map — often unconsciously — to find our way along the daily journey. The challenge is to *consciously* evaluate the map and reconstruct it when circumstances change — especially if it does not adequately reflect and respect the diversity of life itself.

SOUL MATES: HONORING THE MYSTERIES OF LOVE AND RELATIONSHIP,
by Thomas Moore, Harper Collins, New York, 1994, 267 pages, paperback, $13.

In his new book, Thomas Moore guides us out onto the vast and turbulent ocean of love, where a knowledge of soul is essential.

When a relationship starts to founder, he tells us, we think we can solve the problem by improving our skills in communication or by thinking or talking things through in a rational manner.

The trouble is, we are in the domain of the soul, and we may need, instead, to reflect deeply on our memories, dreams and fantasies.

Soul, unlike spirit, expresses itself through moods, longings, passions, emotions, and fears. And these must be attended to; must be honored and respected, if we are not to be wrecked, or becalmed, in the shallow surface waters of life.

"When we give attention to our fantasies and longings," Moore tells us, "and allow them to influence the way we live, we are allowing our innate soulfulness to play a creative, enriching role in our lives."

Programs of self-improvement, on the other hand, work against the soul. Self improvement, Moore points out, implies that there is something wrong with who we are. Everyone wants to be someone else, but getting to know and love yourself means accepting who you are, complete with your inadequacies and irrationalities. Only by loving the soul in its entirety can we really love ourselves."

Commenting on the late Paul Tillich's moving sermon "You Are Accepted," Moore writes,

> We look at ourselves and don't like what we see. We imagine a better life, a more sensitive or stronger personality, deeper relationships. We try to change and to become someone better, but years pass and the old imperfections remain steadfast. One day we may learn Tillich's important lesson, to accept ourselves fundamentally, with a "merciful, divine love toward ourselves." This self-acceptance, Moore tells us, has everything to do with developing a good, intimate relationship to our own soul and the souls of others.

Soul Mates gives us much needed permission and encouragement to imagine and explore the rich treasures that are buried in the field of dreams and fantasies that border the everyday world of "should" and "must" and "can't." *PW*

WOMEN IN PRAISE OF THE SACRED: 43 CENTURIES OF SPIRITUAL POETRY BY WOMEN,
edited by Jane Hirshfield, HarperPerennial, New York, 1995, 259 pages, paperback, $12.00.

Gentle, passionate, serious, serene, informative and fascinating all at once, this collection of spiritual poems represents a mature feminine spirituality and refinement. Whereas all too many efforts to recover women's "lost voices" feature mediocre work, Hirshfield has gathered writings of outstanding women such as Antal, who lived in South India in the 8th century, the 12th century Japanese Buddhist, Kojiju, and the nineteenth century Sufi, Bibi Hayati, whose radiance and sweetness shine in verses like the following:

> From the moment of Time's first-drawn breath,
> Love resides in us.

Each of the approximately 70 writers is introduced by a page or so of captivating facts and anecdotes about herself and her era. We learn, for example, that Mahadeviyakka in twelfth century India took the supreme risk of abandoning conventional life and travelling around India in order to live close to nature and God.

Clearly the product of years and years of research and reflection, *Women in Praise of the Sacred* is a spiritual jewel. *MFG*

A GOD WHO LOOKS LIKE ME: DISCOVERING A WOMAN-AFFIRMING SPIRITUALITY,
by Patricia Lynn Reilly, Ballantine Books, New York, 1995, 350 pages, hardcover, $22.50.

I find this book particularly intriguing because it is both a beautiful story and a practical workbook. One can read it as a poignant account of women's longing to find "the feminine face of God" and a woman-affirming spirituality. As a narrative, it records women's memories of religious wounding, struggles with distorted images of femininity, of gradual awakening and jubilant recovery.

In addition to being a book one can read alone, it is also an excellent guide for women's groups — (the author recommends weekly meetings of about six people for six to nine months). There are exercises, discussion topics, meditations, and rituals that can take women of all ages through their religious past toward a more comfortable present and more hopeful future. A moving and empowering book. *MFG*

We welcome your comments. Please write to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

John R. Welsh's article on "Images of God" is the best thing I've read in a long time — anywhere. Onward and upward. "Time makes ancient good uncouth!"

Truman Bullard; Carlisle, PA

Please ask the readers of *Fellowship in Prayer* to pray that the Chinese government will move the site of the Non-governmental Forum on Women back to Beijing, where the Fourth UN World Conference on Women was scheduled to be held in September. I believe that the change of location to a site one to two hours outside the city was an attempt to cut off communication with the people of Beijing, government delegates, and the media.

If God was able to effect such a great change in Paul, God can surely change a few bureaucrats. The New Testament admonishes us "to ask," and adds, "it shall be given you." So please let us pray together for this.

Heide Shrouder; Mississauga, Ontario

I learned about your work through *Triangles Bulletin*. Would you please send to me any of your publications on prayer — even if they are used or damaged. We need prayer to solve our problems.

Ime J. Ebong; Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

I loved your interview with Brother David Steindl-Rast, "Coming Alive and Becoming Real." Thank you!

June Moreau; Lexington, MA

Greetings from Japan! Your publication has made the rounds of an adult class on scripture which I teach here. Most participants are non-Christian, so they appreciate that your articles deal with various faith traditions.

Bea Wagner, OSF; Nagoya, Japan

Your little publication has helped me "walk in a sacred way" for many years. This help in looking outside of my self has enabled me to help many others. Thanks so much.

Stewart Rafert; Newark, DE

It is with real joy that "l'Association pour la Sauvegarde et le Maintien de la Paix" learned that Fellowship in Prayer is an international organization which does not have a financial goal, but exists to promote the practice of prayer and serves as an instrument of solidarity among all religions.

To unite in prayer and together appeal to God that the sun of peace may shine on our agitated world, so tormented by incessant wars, appears to the A.S.M.P. as a most effective way to work for world harmony in these last years of the twentieth century.

For this reason, our organization initiated an annual Mass for peace in the world, which is held at the Basilica, Our Lady of Peace of Yamoussokro, annually on the first Thursday in the month of May. The Basilica is a very beautiful edifice left as a gift to humanity by President Houpouet Boigny at his death in 1993.

The A.S.M.P. would love to see this practice extended to all of the world's religions. Christians might use the first Sunday in May, and Muslims the first Friday in the same month. It is our fervent desire to see Christians and Muslims act together for a similar cause, since such an effort could help to establish true fraternity between these two great religions.

Coulibaly Benjamin; Abidjan, Ivory coast

We are forming a small monastic community dedicated to prayer and caring for the sick and elderly. We would like to hear from anyone interested in joining us; men or women, married or single. Prince of Peace Center, P. O. Box 363, Warren, VT 05674.

Sr. Joan; Prince of Peace Center; Warren, VT

Thank you for *Fellowship in Prayer.* We are always searching for ways to pray more effectively.

Delores and Bert Harden; Staten Island, NY

A prisoner and I shared my wife's copy of your wonderful spiritual periodical during our counseling visits in Lehigh County Prison. The prisoner has now been moved to Dallas State Prison and has specifically requested a subscription, stating "I miss it." Thank you for this inspirational and helpful journal.

Bob Zimmerman; Whitehall, PA

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We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words, should be typed, double spaced, on 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ by 11 inch paper, on a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch floppy minidisk, 2S/2D, or 2S/HD, or on 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ HD microdisks, in WordPerfect and sent to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542-3227. Please include a brief biography.

This publication is made possible by the generous contributions of our readers and the generosity of the late Eli Lilly.

We are often asked to share names and addresses with other non-profit spiritual organizations whose work might be of interest to you. If that's not all right with you, please drop us a note and we will withhold your name.

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